

Substitution.

Recent developments concerning certain practices in the retail drug trade afford ground for expressions of regret that they should obtain in any degree, and particularly to the extent it seems they do. We refer especially to substitution, in its most offensive and reprehensible form, and it is surprising that so many supposedly reputable druggists are found practising it. Not long ago it was shown that St. Louis and Chicago druggists, when the proprietary article Listerine was called for, in more than half the cases would dispense some substitute, without any attempt to inform the customer that the imitation was given. For example's sake, the proprietors of the preparation made it very warm for some of the substitutors, and others promised over their signatures to sin no more. The condition of affairs prevailing in the cities named was found existent in many others, the extent of substitution being proven far greater than had been thought possible. Manufacturers of other proprietaries have been pursuing like investigations, with the same results, and we understand that offenders are to be brought to a full realization of their responsibility. There is a large class of proprietary medicines which are particularly subject to the attack of the substitutor. Not the ordinary, popular patent medicine, sold only in package form, but those which are exploited principally to the physician, and directed in prescriptions, being used by the dispenser in portions from the original container. Here is offered abundant chance for substituting an imitation for the genuine. Listerine, Antikainia and many others are examples of this class. The substitutes vary wonderfully in physical and chemical characteristics, in some instances being such palpable frauds that sight alone will detect the imposture.

A few words to druggists anent substitution. There are two forms of substitution, one thoroughly reputable, honest and professional, the other a fraud and dishonest. The honorable variety is where the druggist, with no deception, no false representations, with the consent of physician or customer, brings into play his own professional knowledge and skill in opposition to the article called for. But, observe, there must be no deceit in this matter. It is perfectly legitimate to try and sell your own preparation, provided it be understood by the customer that it is yours. But the substitution complained of is not of this kind. It is dishonest and disreputable in every respect. The customer or patient has the right to get what he believes he is getting, and the druggist defrauds him if he doesn't supply it when he pretends to. An excuse frequently advanced for substitution is that physicians prescribe every new preparation called to their notice. They specify a certain make, when the druggist may have in stock his own or some other equally efficacious. A single prescription may be all that is received for that particular

make, and the remainder is a dead loss. Much sympathy is felt for the druggist in this unpleasant predicament, but strict honesty should lead him to procure the goods ordered or refuse to put up the prescription. The only incentive to substitution is the desire for greater profit, but a business built up from dishonest practices is not a stable one. The arguments in favor of substitution are fallacious, based upon unsound premises. To those who at times may feel tempted to replace the directed article by another, we would say, don't. Loss of immediate gain is amply compensated by ultimate success and a character for strictest probity in professional dealings.

Substitution, besides being a dishonest, is a dangerous practice. The exact composition of a proprietary article is seldom known, and to replace it with a guess mixture is a risky business. The substitution of cheap and inferior drugs for the pure and genuine is equally reprehensible.

We would not sermonize, and our views on this matter are, we believe, in sympathy with those of all conscientious pharmacists, but we could speak a word of warning to those whom nothing but a good fright will turn to better ways. Several producing chemists and pharmacists have become tired of the practices of the substitutors, and propose to bring them up with a round turn, and have inaugurated a searching inquiry in all the trade centres of the country. While we know of no concerted action, the investigation will be most thorough. If friendly, cautious and considerate treatment do not avail, counsel has been retained to prosecute vigorously those who refuse more amiable methods. The manufacturers are right in this determination, and have the approval of the better class of pharmacists. Whatever be the nature of the proprietary article (good or bad) the druggist who secretly substitutes is guilty of theft. The infringement of trademark rights must not be overlooked. This is a serious legal offence, the penalty for which is of a heavily unpleasant character. We encourage the supplying of popular demand by medicines of your own compounding, every manner of inducing the physicians to employ your preparations rather than the proprietaries and semi-proprietaries, so long as this is all done openly and above board, but have no sympathy for the dishonest substitutor, and would see him get his deserts.—*Phar. Era.*

Ovules, Suppositories, Bougies and Intra-Uterine Crayons.

V. J. Pequart, pharmacist, of Verdun-sur-Meuse, contributes the following to *l'Union Pharmaceutique*:

Glycerin, solidified by the addition of gelatin, renders great service in preparing this class of remedies. As an excipient it is easy to manipulate, and if certain precautions are taken it readily combines pharmaceutically with such active medicaments as tannin, the extracts, iodoform,

salol, sublimate, etc. The price, withal, is very moderate, an item to be consulted in these hard times. As it is always important that the pharmacist should have a *modus operandi* that he can rely upon in all cases, I offer the following:

FOR OVULES AND SUPPOSITORIES.

White gelatin, best 30 parts.
Distilled water 45 parts.

Leave in contact for two or three hours and then add:

Pure glycerin (30) 165 parts.

The medicament should be added to the glycerin before mixing. If it is insoluble in that medium it must be pulverized as finely as possible and suspended in it.

Melt in a water bath, and agitate to secure homogeneity. As soon as this is effected, let the mixture cool down to about half the original temperature, and then pour into moulds. This cooling is the more essential in those cases in which the remedy is merely suspended in the vehicle. The use of the water-bath is essential, from the fact that gelatin once superheated refuses to solidify. Preserve the product in lycopodium.

BOUGIES PORTE REMEDE.

The preparation of bougies in which an active remedial agent is contained (*bougies porte remede*) comprehends two operations, viz.: The preparation of the inert core, and the preparation of the active mass to cover the same.

Preparation of the inert core mass.—

Take of

Best white gelatin 20 parts.
Distilled water 10 parts.
Glycerin, pure 30 parts.

Let the gelatin and water remain in contact as before, add the glycerin and melt together in the water bath. When homogeneous pour out on a shallow tin tray, or on a perfectly flat sheet of tin slightly turned up around the edges ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch is sufficient), which has been well warmed, as this insures a sheet of gelatin of even thickness. The sheet should be about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (1.5 millimeter) in thickness.

When quite cold and solid, with a knife and straight-edge, cut the plaque into strips $\frac{1}{16}$ inch wide and 6 inches long, put them in a dry, cool place and leave them for several days to dry out, and thus lose a part of their elasticity.

Preparation of the active mass.—Take of

Pulverized gum acacia 5 parts.
Milk sugar 20 parts.
Honey 1 part.
Glycerin, pure 14 parts.

The active substance, the quantity prescribed.

If necessary, add sufficient water (never more than a few drops) to give a proper consistence. Mix and make a mass. Roll out this mass on a slab well dusted with lycopodium, as you would in making pastilles, to about the thickness of parchment paper. Then, with the knife and straight-edge, divide the thin leaf into the same number of strips as you have core-